

ADDRESS

TO THE

PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES.

FELLOW-CITIZENS :

WASHINGTON, *Feb. 22, 1860.*

The political aspect of the country fills the public mind with painful apprehension. The people are everywhere disturbed with the fear of some disastrous crisis. Many are alarmed for the safety of the Union. All are conscious that the sentiment of fraternity which once linked the States together, even more firmly than the compact of the Constitution itself, has been rudely shaken, and that discord has crept into the relationship of communities which should have found, both in the interests of the present and the memories of the past, the strongest motives for mutual regard and confidence.

What has produced these general and unhappy convictions ?

It has been too apparent to escape the most casual observation that, for some years past, there has been manifested a design, in the movements of influential political leaders, to force the country into an organization of parties founded on the question of slavery.

The first introduction of this subject into party politics engendered a controversy which has constantly increased in extent and bitterness, mingling with, or usurping the place of all other political questions, and giving to those party politics a greater and more dangerous vehemence. Considerations of the public welfare seem to be cast aside, to make room for wider and more unrestrained contention on this single and engrossing theme.

The two great parties in the country (the Democratic and Republican) have been the chief actors in this fatal contest, if not its authors. Whether they have always exerted themselves to allay the excitement to which it gave rise, or, on the contrary, have both of them occasionally employed it for the promotion of party purposes, it is not for us to determine. It is sufficient to note, that the mind of the people has been industriously exercised by this contest to the service of sectional agitation, and that in its progress the teachings of the fathers of the republic, the lights of history, the landmarks of constitutional power have been renounced, our old and revered traditions of policy spurned, and the welfare of the present and the hopes of the future been brought into jeopardy in the alternations of passionate challenge and defiance between the angry disputants.

It is not our purpose to arraign or to denounce either of these parties for their past errors or transgressions, but we regard it as an indisputable fact, that by their conflicts they have been mainly instrumental in producing the present lamentable state of public affairs. It would be easy to establish this position by a reference to events in the recent history of the country, with which the public is but too familiar ; but we purposely abstain from all comments upon them, as inconsistent with the limits of this address, and as tending to revive controversies which it is its object to allay. We will simply state, that the one, by its frequent and unnecessary intrusion of the slavery question into party politics, has exasperated sectional feeling at the North and increased the growing spirit of disunion at the South, while the other has been prompt to avail itself of these opportunities for anti-slavery agitation.

After having so long agitated the country by their reciprocal assaults, these parties are now preparing for a sectional struggle far exceeding in violence any that has yet occurred, the results of which may be disastrous to the country.

As an indication of the character of this struggle, of its objects and possible consequences, we need only point to the significant fact, that a convention has been called by one of these parties to select a candidate for the office of Chief Magistrate of the Union from which, by the necessary logic of its construction, fifteen States of that Union are excluded.

Solemnly impressed with these facts, a number of gentlemen from different parts of the country, among whom were members of the present Congress, and of Congresses of former date, recently assembled in the City of Washington to deliberate on means for averting dangers to which they may lead.

It was the unanimous opinion of the meeting, that immediate steps should be taken to organize a "Constitutional Union Party," pledged to support "the Union, the Constitution, and the enforcement of the laws."

This organization was accordingly commenced by the appointment of a "Central Executive Committee" charged with the general direction of the party, and the preparation of an address to the people of the United States.

We need not assure you, fellow-citizens, that we approach this task with diffidence and anxiety. We are aware of the difficulty which attends the endeavor, at any time, to persuade men to abandon political associations to which they are allied, either by interest or preference, and we know how much that difficulty is increased when party attachment is heightened by the ardor of expected success, or inflamed by the zeal of opposition. But there are, nevertheless, junctures when honest-hearted citizens will be prepared, at any sacrifice of prejudice or opinion, to perform this duty to their country. It is the policy of the dominant parties to underrate the real strength of those whom disapprobation, indifference, or disgust force into the position of neutrals in political warfare. The ordinary tactics of parties teach them to discourage those whom they cannot enlist. But the fact is demonstrable that the numbers who occupy this position at all times, and more especially at the present time, constitute a most influential portion of the whole people. If the investigation could be made, there is reason to believe it would result in disclosing the fact that, as parties are now constituted, little less than a million of voters will be driven out of the sphere of active participation in the coming election. The old Whig strength of the country will be found to furnish no small contribution to this mass. Even those of that association who have been induced to take sides in recent elections with one or the other of the opponent divisions, acknowledge but scant fealty to their new leaders; and the greater number of them will, it is believed, be prompt to join their old comrades in rallying to a conservative field to fight a new battle for the cause of the Constitution, and the restoration of lost harmony. Large numbers of the old Democratic party, who withdrew from the line of march when they discovered it leading towards internal strife, and the assault of the traditional policy by which that party achieved its former triumphs, would, we have no doubt, supply a powerful reinforcement to the friends of the Union:

In the American party, to which the breaking up of old organizations gave birth, and which has been active in the endeavor to establish an intermediate power between the contending forces that have engrossed the field, will be found a very large element of conservative strength to increase the volume of the proposed organization.

If we add to all these that mass of quiet, unobtrusive citizens, who have always shunned the turmoil of political life, content to leave the destiny of the country in the hands of those who, in the ordinary condition of the national progress, were most ambitious to assume its direction, and who have reposed such faith in the patriotism of their fellow-men as to feel no concern in the question of the supremacy of party, but whom the extraordinary incentives of a crisis like the present must awaken to the resolve of an effort to protect the threatened safety of the confederacy, we have elements sufficient, by their combination, to form a great party, to which additional strength will be imparted by the exalted patriotism of its principles and objects. Moreover, it is only just to the two contending parties to say, that we do not despair of finding in the ranks of each, numerous individuals who, tired of intestine strife, and alarmed at the threatening aspect of affairs, will unite with the only party which holds out to the country a prospect of repose.

Can it be possible that, with so glorious a cause before us, an appeal to the patriotism of the land founded on such inducements as the present exigency supplies, can fall upon unheeding ears, or fail to rouse the national heart to the great enterprise of this commanding duty? Now, when every honest and thoughtful citizen within the broad confines of this Union, every true son of the republic at home, and every brother of our lineage abroad, is filled with dismay at the sudden rupture of the national concord, can it be that the power which is able to pour oil upon the troubled waters, and bring gladness back to every good man's fireside, will withhold its hand from the labor? That this generation of American citizens, awakened by the clamor that threatens the integrity of our Union, and conscious of its faculty to command the ending of mad debate, and to re-establish the foundations of a healthful, just, and benignant administration of the duties and benefits of the Constitution, will play the sluggard in this momentous hour, and incur the everlasting shame of passively looking on upon the demolition of this fabric of confederated States? That this generation will prove itself so false to all generations to come as to permit, when it has the power to forbid, the destruction of this glorious heritage of so many millions of freemen, with such immortal memories clustering around the path of their history, with such grand hopes hovering over the career before them, the central point of so many blessings, the subject of so many prayers of the enlightened humanity of the whole world?

Let all men reflect upon the incredible folly of our quarrel.

The country is wrought into a tempest of excitement. Two great political armies are contending for mastery. Both are infuriated with a rage that threatens fearful extremes. The great mass of law-abiding citizens are looking on with amazement, and an

ominous apprehension of mischief. And yet there is no danger impending over the Republic which human passions have not created, and which human wisdom may not prevent.

We have pointed out the chief source of the present agitation, and think we have sufficiently shown that neither of the two parties who are now seeking to obtain the control of the Government, can be safely entrusted with the management of public affairs. The only way to rescue the country from their hands is to organize a party whose cardinal principle shall be: To remove the subject of slavery from the arena of party politics, and leave it to the independent control of the States in which it exists, and to the unbiased action of the judiciary; to remove all obstacles from the due and faithful execution of the provisions for the rendition of fugitive slaves; to cultivate and expand the resources of the country by such protection to every useful pursuit and interest as is compatible with the general welfare and equitable to all; to maintain peace, as far as possible, and honorable relations to all nations; to guard and enforce the supremacy of the laws by an impartial and strict administration of the powers granted by the Constitution; to respect the rights and reverence the union of the States as the vital source of present peace and prosperity, and the surest guarantee of future power and happiness; to teach reconciliation, fraternity, and forbearance, as the great national charities by which the Union is ever to be preserved, as a fountain of perennial blessings to the people.

Let these principles be taken to the hearts of those who pledge themselves to the support of the party, and let them actuate their private life as well as their public duty.

To promote this movement, measures should be adopted with as little delay as possible, such as will afford an opportunity to the party to exert a controlling influence on the approaching election, and to select candidates upon whom its vote may be effectively concentrated.

To this end we propose that a convention be immediately held in each State, which shall assume the duty of embodying the whole conservative strength of each in such form as shall make it most effective; that each of these conventions shall make a nomination of two candidates for the Presidency, (omitting to nominate a Vice President,) to be selected from those most eminent and approved in public esteem, one of which candidates, at least, shall be a citizen of some other State than that in which he is nominated; that these two candidates from each State shall be submitted to the consideration of a General Convention, to be assembled at Baltimore, at a time that shall be designated by the National Executive Committee, which General Convention shall be empowered to select from the whole number of the nominations transmitted to it, a candidate for President and Vice President, as the candidates of the Constitutional Union party; that this General Convention shall consist of a representation from each State, composed of the same number of members as its representation in the two houses of Congress; that this representation of each State be chosen either by the State convention itself, or in such other manner as such convention, in view of the shortness of the time for the proceeding, may appoint.

A convention constituted in accordance with this plan, we think, would be satisfactory to all parts of the country, and altogether competent to the duty of a discreet and judicious selection of candidates. The people who have so much reason, in their habitual experience of the insufficiency of conventions, to feel no little distrust of these bodies, might prefer some other mode of nomination, if a better could now be adopted. But in the present emergency, when delay would render any attempt to make a nomination for the coming election useless, we are persuaded they will acquiesce in the plan proposed, as the best the time will allow. Such a convention will avoid some of the objections to which the ordinary and accustomed composition of conventions is exposed. It will be confined to the single duty of selecting the candidates from a number of eminent citizens presented by the several States as worthy of the first office in the Government; and it will, most probably, find in the concurring opinion of several State conventions in favor of one or more individuals, a useful guide to the most acceptable nomination. And as it will be restricted in its choice to the names presented, it will under no circumstances offend the public wish by selecting candidates unknown to, or unrespected by the country.

Whether any other principles than those we have enumerated, shall be enunciated, it will be for the convention to determine. "Platforms" have been so frequently employed as the shallow devices of party deception, that they have come to be viewed with distrust by the people. We know of no higher and nobler aim than the restoration of peace and harmony to a divided and distracted country, and no platform more acceptable to every true patriot than "the Union, the Constitution, and the enforcement of the laws."

Fellow-citizens, the task that has been allotted to us is performed. We have pointed out a path by which, in our opinion, the country may be rescued from its perilous posi-

tion. It is for you to determine whether you will pursue that path, or continue in one which, however the approaching struggle may terminate, may lead to victory, but not to peace; to a brief cessation of strife, but not to a restoration of harmony.

JOHN J. CRITTENDEN, Ky., *Chairman*,
WILLIAM C. RIVES, Va.,
WASHINGTON HUNT, N. Y.,
WILLIAM A. GRAHAM, N. C.,
HENRY M. FULLER, Pa.,
JOHN P. KENNEDY, Md.,
HENRY Y. CRANSTON, R. I.,
ALEXANDER R. BOTELER, Va.,
JOHN A. ROCKWELL, Ct.,
JOHN WHEELER, Vt.,
J. MORRISON HARRIS, Md.,
LEWIS CONDUCT, N. J.,
CHARLES M. CONRAD, La.,
MARSHALL P. WILDER, Mass.,

JOSHUA HILL, Ga.,
JOSEPH N. SNYDER, Ohio,
WILLIAM TEMPLE, Del.,
JOHN DUNHAM, Conn.,
JOHN A. GILMER, N. C.,
C. C. LATHROP, Pa.,
R. W. THOMPSON, Ind.,
N. W. SHELLEY, Ala.,
GEORGE BRIGGS, N. Y.,
WILLIAM G. BROWNLOW, Tenn.,
WILLIAM L. TOOLE, Iowa,
JERE. CLEMENS, Tenn.,
E. J. WHITLOCK, N. Y.,

Committee.

FRANCIS GRANGER,
Chairman National Whig Executive Com.,
JACOB BROOME,
Chairman Nat. American Executive Com.

ACCEPTANCE OF MR. BELL.

Letter of Mr. Hunt to Mr. Bell.

BALTIMORE, May 11, 1860.

DEAR SIR: It has become my agreeable duty, as the presiding officer of the National Union Convention, which terminated its session in this city last evening, to inform you that you have received the nomination of that body as its candidate for the office of President of the United States.

After a frank interchange of sentiment, in which the merits of all the distinguished candidates presented for our consideration were canvassed in the most friendly spirit, the Convention resolved, with entire unanimity and great enthusiasm, to place your name before the American people as the chosen representative of its principles of constitutional liberty and union.

With a just appreciation of your known moderation and justice; your uniform support of wise and beneficent measures of legislation; your firm and heroic resistance of the repeal of the Missouri compromise and all kindred measures calculated to engender sectional discord; and your life-long devotion to the union, harmony, and prosperity of these States, it was decided with one accord that you are the man for the crisis, and that with your honored name inscribed on our banner an earnest appeal shall be made to the people to rally for the preservation of our national institutions. We feel, one and all, that your election to the Presidency would insure the integrity of our Government, restore the peace of the Union, and afford an unflinching guarantee for the supremacy of the Constitution and the Laws.

I have the honor to be, with high respect, your obedient servant,

WASHINGTON HUNT.

To the Hon. JOHN BELL.

Reply of Mr. Bell to Mr. Hunt.

NASHVILLE, May 21, 1860.

DEAR SIR: Official information of my nomination to the Presidency by the National Union Convention, of which you were the presiding officer, was communicated to me, by your letter of the 11th instant, at Philadelphia, on the eve of my departure with my family for my place of residence, in Tennessee, and, diffident as I was of my worthiness, I did not hesitate to signify my intention to accept the position assigned to me by that distinguished and patriotic body. But for convenience, and under a sense of the propriety of acting in so grave a matter with greater deliberation, I concluded, as I informed you at the time by a private note, to defer a formal acceptance until after my arrival at home.

Now, that I have had all the leisure that I could desire for reflection upon the circumstances under which the nomination was made, the purity of the motives and the lofty spirit of patriotism by which the Convention was animated, as evinced in all its proceedings, I can appreciate more justly the honor done me by the nomination; and, though it might have been more fortunate for the country had it fallen upon some one of the

many distinguished statesmen whose names were brought to the notice of the Convention, rather than myself, I accept it with all its possible responsibilities.

Whatever may be the issue of the ensuing canvass, as for myself I shall ever regard it as a proud distinction—one worth a life-long effort to attain—to be pronounced worthy to receive the highest office in the Government at such a time as the present, and by such a Convention as that which recently met in Baltimore—a Convention far less imposing by the number of its members, large as it was, than by their high character. In it were men venerable alike for their age and their public services, who could not have been called from their voluntary retirement from public life but by the strongest sense of patriotic duty; others, though still in the prime of life, ranking with the first men of the country by honors and distinctions already acquired in high official positions, State and National; many of them statesmen worthy to fill the highest office in the Government; a still greater number occupying the highest rank in their respective professional pursuits; others distinguished by their intelligence and well-earned influence in various walks of private life: and all animated and united by one spirit and one purpose, the result of a strong conviction that our political system under the operation of a complication of disorders, is rapidly approaching a crisis when a speedy change must take place, indicating, as in diseases of the physical body, recovery or death.

The Convention, in discarding the use of platforms, exacts no pledges from those whom they deem worthy of the highest trusts under the Government; wisely considering that the surest guarantee of a man's future usefulness and fidelity to the great interests of the country, in any official station to which he may be chosen, is to be found in his past history connected with the public service. The pledge implied in my acceptance of the nomination of the National Union Convention is, that, should I be elected, I will not depart from the spirit and tenor of my past course; and the obligation to keep this pledge derives a double force from the consideration that none is required from me.

You, sir, in your letter containing the official announcement of my nomination, have been pleased to ascribe to me the merit of moderation and justice in my past public career. You have likewise given me credit for a uniform support of all wise and beneficent measures of legislation, for a firm resistance to all measures calculated to engender sectional discord, and for a life-long devotion to the union, harmony, and prosperity of these States. Whether your personal partiality has led you to overstate my merits as a public man or not, in your enumeration of them you have presented a summary basis of all sound American statesmanship. It may be objected that nothing is said in this summary, in express terms, of the obligations imposed by the Constitution; but the duty to respect and observe them is clearly implied; for, without the due observance, in the conduct of the Government, of the Constitution, its restrictions and requirements, fairly interpreted, in accordance with its spirit and objects, there can be no end to sectional discord, no security for the harmony of the Union.

I have not the vanity to assume that in my past connexion with the public service I have exemplified the course of a sound American statesman; but if I have deserved the favorable view taken of it in your letter, I may hope, by a faithful adherence to the maxims by which I have heretofore been guided, not altogether to disappoint the confidence and expectations of those who have placed me in my present relation to the public; and if, under providence, I should be called to preside over the affairs of this great country as the Executive Chief of the Government, the only further pledge I feel called upon to make is, that to the utmost of my ability, and with whatever strength of will I can command, all the powers and influences belonging to my official station shall be employed and directed for the promotion of all the great objects for which the Government was instituted, but more especially for the maintenance of the Constitution and the Union against all opposing influences and tendencies.

I cannot conclude this letter without expressing my high gratification at the nomination to the second office under the Government of that eminently gifted and distinguished statesman of Massachusetts, EDWARD EVERETT, a gentleman held by general consent to be altogether worthy of the first.

Tendering my grateful acknowledgments for the kind and complimentary remarks with which you were pleased to accompany the communication of my nomination, I am, dear sir, with the highest respect, your obedient servant,

JOHN BELL.

To the Hon. WASHINGTON HUNT.

ACCEPTANCE OF MR. EVERETT.

Ex-Governor Hunt to Mr. Everett.

BALTIMORE, 11th May, 1860.

DEAR SIR: It has become my agreeable duty, as the presiding officer of the National Union Convention, which terminated its session in this city last evening, to inform you

that you have received the nomination of that body as its candidate for the office of Vice President of the United States.

It would be far beyond my power to convey to you an adequate impression of the intense ardor and enthusiasm with which the nomination was made. Without the formality of a ballot, your name was on every lip, and was adopted with loud acclamations coming from grateful and patriotic hearts.

State after State vied with each other for the privilege of rendering to you its tribute of affectionate homage and admiration.

The high estimate of your valuable public services entertained by the whole country, and the universal gratitude excited by your voluntary efforts as a private citizen, to imbue the minds of your countrymen with feelings of love and veneration for the character of Washington, and respect for his example and teachings, were reflected by the Convention in a manner at once impressive, appropriate, and gratifying.

It was believed, moreover, that the association of your name with that of John Bell, as candidates for the highest offices in the gift of the nation, would of itself constitute an irresistible appeal to the patriotism, loyalty, and national spirit of the whole American people.

In this season of discord and distraction, we feel it to be a paramount duty to make an earnest effort to revive sentiments of harmony and brotherhood between the different States and sections of our Union.

We were not ignorant of your cherished purpose to decline in future the cares and honors of official station; yet we do not permit ourselves to doubt that the same sentiment of patriotism which your voice and example have inspired in the hearts of others, will prompt you to yield to the call now made upon you, by a large and respectable portion of your countrymen.

I have the honor to be, with high respect,
Your obedient servant,

WASHINGTON HUNT.

To the Honorable EDWARD EVERETT.

Mr. Everett's reply to Mr. Hunt.

Boston, May 29, 1860.

MY DEAR SIR: I have duly received your letter of the 11th, in which you inform me officially that the National Union Convention, recently in session at Baltimore, had done me the honor to nominate me as its candidate for the office of Vice President of the United States.

I am deeply impressed with this manifestation of the favorable opinion of the Convention, comprising as it did among its members so many persons distinguished for public service, patriotism, and intelligence, and fairly representing a considerable portion of the conservative feeling of the country. For the great cordiality with which, as you inform me, my name was proposed and received, my warmest thanks are due.

The grateful acceptance of such a nomination would, under ordinary circumstances, be a matter of course; but it has unavoidably been with me the subject of long and anxious hesitation. The grounds of this hesitation I owe to this Convention which has honored me with this mark of its confidence, and to myself, to explain; loth as I am to dwell on matters of personal interest of no importance to the public.

It is generally known that I have, for some years past, retired from active participation in political life, not, as I hope I have shown, from indolence or want of sympathy with my fellow-citizens in the pursuit of the great objects of social life. The reasons of my retirement have been more than once publicly stated, and I beg to repeat them here from my speech at the Union meeting in Faneuil Hall last December:

"I did not suppose that anything could occur which would make me think it my duty to appear again on this platform on any occasion of a political character; and had this meeting been of a party nature, or designed to promote any party purpose, I should not have been here. When compelled by the prostration of my health five years ago to resign the distinguished place which I then filled in the public service, it was with no expectation, no wish, and no intention of ever again mingling in the scenes of public life. I have accordingly, with the partial restoration of my health, abstained from all participation in political action of any kind; partly because I have found a more congenial, and, as I venture to think, a more useful occupation in seeking to rally the affections of my countrymen, North and South, to that great name and precious memory which are left almost alone of all the numerous kindly associations which once bound the different sections of the country together; and also because, between the extremes of opinion that have long distracted, and now threaten to convulse the country, I find no middle ground of practical usefulness on which a friend of moderate counsels can stand."

It having been suggested to me, notwithstanding these avowals, that I might be thought of at the Union Convention as a candidate for the Presidency, I requested by telegraphic message and by letter that my name, if brought forward, might be withdrawn. It is true that in these communications I had only in view a nomination to the Presidency, none other having been suggested to me; but all the reasons above indicated, which led me in advance to decline such a nomination, apply with equal force to the Vice Presidency. These reasons of course still exist in unimpaired force, and I cannot now take an active part in politics without abandoning a deliberately formed purpose, and even exposing myself to the suspicion of insincerity in its persistent avowal.

Without dwelling upon these considerations, of which, however, I am sure the weight will be admitted, I beg leave to advert for a moment to my connection with the movement for the purchase of Mount Vernon, to which your letter alludes in such obliging terms. The favor which has attended my exertions in that cause, (if I may without indelicacy say anything on the subject,) has been mainly the result of my known and recognized disconnection from party politics. If it could have been even plausibly insinuated that I was or intended to become a candidate for high political honors, I should, in my various excursions in aid of that fund, have laid myself open to the imputation of speaking one word for Mount Vernon and two for myself. As it is, the people throughout the Union have generously given me credit for having a single eye to that meritorious object. As far as the purchase of Mount Vernon is concerned, that object has been effected under the judicious and efficient management of the Regent and Vice-Regents of the Association, with the aid of their intelligent and active assistants throughout the Union. But a sum of money equal to that already raised is still wanting for the repair of the mansion, the enclosure of the land purchased, the restoration of the house and grounds, as far as practicable, to their condition in 1800, and the establishment of a permanent fund for their conservation. I own that I am desirous still to enjoy the privilege of co-operating in this noble work, which, however, it will be impossible for me to do to any advantage, whatever may be the result of the present canvass, if I am now drawn into the vortex of a strenuously contested election. There are many parts of the country which I have not yet visited. I had promised myself a rich harvest from the patriotic liberality of the States on the Gulf of Mexico, and of those on the Mississippi river, (which I have not yet been able to visit, with the exception of Missouri, though often kindly invited,) and I confess that it is very painful to me to withdraw from that broad field of congenial labor to tread the thorny and *thankless* paths of politics.

Apart from the pecuniary aspects of the case, which, however, are of considerable importance, I will candidly say, that in holding up to the admiring veneration of the American people the peerless name of Washington, (almost the only bond of fraternal sentiment which the bitterness of our sectional controversies has left us,) I feel as if I was doing more good, as far as I am able to do any good, and contributing more to revive the kindly feeling which once existed between North and South, and which is now, I grieve to say, nearly extinct, than I could possibly do by engaging in the wretched scramble for office, which is one great source of the dangers that threaten the country.

These considerations, and others of a still more personal nature, have necessarily occasioned me to reflect long and anxiously before accepting the nomination with which the Union convention has honored me. In yielding at length to the earnest solicitations which have been addressed to me from the most respectable sources in almost every part of the Union, I make a painful sacrifice of inclination to what I am led to believe a public duty. It has been urged upon me, and I cannot deny that such is my own feeling, that we have fallen upon times which call upon all good citizens, at whatever cost of personal convenience, to contribute their share, however humble, to the public service.

I suppose it to be the almost universal impression (it is certainly mine) that the existing state of affairs is extremely critical. Our political controversies have substantially assumed an almost purely sectional character—that of a fearful struggle between the North and the South. It would not be difficult to show at length the perilous nature and tendency of this struggle; but I can only say, on this occasion, that, in my opinion, it cannot be much longer kept up without rending the Union. I do not mean that either of the great parties in the country desires or aims at a separation of the States as a final object, although there are extremists in considerable numbers who have that object in view. While a potent and a baneful influence is exercised by men of this class, in both sections of the Union, a portion of the conservative masses are insensibly and gradually goaded into concurrence with opinions and sentiments with which, in the outset, they had no sympathy. Meantime, almost wholly neglecting the main public interests, our political controversies turn more and more on questions in reference to which, as abstract formulæ, the great sections of the country differ irreconcilably, though there is $\bar{c}$ thing practically important at stake which requires the discussion to be kept up.

These controversies are carried on with steadily increasing bitterness and exasperation.

The passions thus kindled have already led to acts of violence and bloodshed, approaching to civil war in the Territories, and attempted servile insurrection in the States. The great religious and philanthropic associations of the country are sundered, and the kindly social relations of North and South seriously impaired. The national House of Representatives, hovering on the verge of anarchy, requires weeks to effect the organization, which ought to be the work of an hour, and it holds its session (many of its members, I am told, armed with concealed weapons) on the crust of a volcano. The candidates for the Presidency representing respectively the dominant sectional ideas, will, at the ensuing election, in all probability, be supported by a pure geographical vote. In other words, we are already brought to a pass at which North and South cannot and will not co-operate in the periodical reorganization of the government.

Can such a state of things long continue, especially with the ever-present risk of new causes of exasperation? I own that it seems to me impossible, unless some healing course is adopted, that the catastrophe, which the mass of good citizens so much deprecate, should be much longer delayed. A spirit of patriotic moderation must be called into action throughout the Union, or it will assuredly be broken up. Unless the warfare of inflammatory speeches and incendiary publications is abandoned, and good citizens, as in 1776 and 1787, North and South, will agree to deal with the same elements of discord (for they existed then as now) as our fathers dealt with them, we shall but for a very few years longer be even nominally brethren of one family. The suggestion that the Union can be maintained by the numerical predominance and military prowess of one section, exerted to coerce the other into submission, is, in my judgment, as self-contradictory as it is dangerous. It comes loaded with the death-smell from fields wet with brothers' blood. If the vital principle of all republican government is "the consent of the governed," much more does a union of coequal sovereign States require, as its basis, the harmony of its members and their voluntary co-operation in its organic functions.

Believing, for these reasons, that healing counsels must be listened to, if we are much longer to remain one people, I regard the late National Union Convention as a movement in the right direction. I could wish that it had been earlier assembled, with less exclusive reference to official nominations, and with a more comprehensive representation, if possible, of the conflicting opinions of the country. On general principles and in ordinary times I admit that third parties are objectionable, but in the existing state of affairs, if there is to be any escape from the present ill-omened conflict, it would seem that a commencement must be made with such a meeting as that of the 9th and 10th at Baltimore. It was a fair representation of the conservative opinion of the country, and the calmness, gravity, and good feeling with which its proceedings were conducted cannot be too highly praised.

In adopting as its platform the Constitution without note or comment, the convention, as it seems to me, pursued a wise and patriotic course. No other course was thought of in the earlier days of the republic. Electioneering platforms are almost without exception equivocal and delusive. It is objected that men differ as to the meaning of the fundamental law; but they differ not less as to any gloss or commentary. The Constitution, in its fair and natural interpretation, is the only basis on which good citizens in every part of the country can now unite; and any attempt to go further will usually have no other effect than to cause those who agree on great practical principles to differ on metaphysical subtleties, or to bring together, by artfully constructed phrases, from selfish motives, those who have nothing else in common.

The candidate for the Presidency presented by the Union Convention is every way worthy of confidence and support. I speak from personal knowledge and long association with him in public service. His distinguished talent, large experience in affairs, proved integrity and sterling patriotism, furnish the amplest pledge for an honest and efficient administration of the government at home and abroad. A citizen of the South, and loyal to her constitutional rights, his impartial and conciliatory course as a public man affords a ground on which he can be supported in either section of the country, without dereliction of principle, and by men of all parties, without a painful sacrifice of former preferences.

Deeply regretting that the Convention has not put it in my power to pay an equally cordial and emphatic tribute to some worthy candidate for the Vice Presidency, but feeling it a duty to give the desired proof of sympathy with their patriotic efforts to restore the happy days of brotherly concord between the different sections of our beloved country, I remain, dear sir, sincerely yours,

EDWARD EVERETT.

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